

Emotional Aspects on Negotiation

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Contents

1. Perception
2. Framing
3. Bias
4. Emotion and Mood
5. Control of Emotion

1. Perception

Perception give meaning to the incoming messages or events, and it is a process to connect people and surroundings. What affects perception? Our mental state, physical condition, role and position, past communication, way of thinking and personality give influence to perception. This also applies to the person we will be dealing with.

Since perception is a process to give meaning to us, it is selective. It classifies the information we have received, and we can say that perception is information processing method. Perception is efficient to make decisions; however, it is not complete and it sacrifices completeness and accuracy because of its nature of selection and classification.

What preclude accurate perception? They are stereotype and selective perception.

Stereotype is adapted when we generalize subjects. It can become a standard to divide people into different groups like we vs you. When we do not have enough sensory information, however, it may lead us to inaccurate conclusion. Limited initial information will form an inaccurate impression of the

other person. When a person holds the impression, in many cases the impression continues. Once a fixed idea is formed, it is hard to change. New information will be taken in by matching the past consistent impression, and we do not accept new information which do not fit into our interpretation based on our experience.

Let us move on to selective perception. We assume that the other person has a certain attribute or definite qualities. We give filter on information, and we form fixed concept. We select information to enhance what was believed, and exclude information which do not match what was believed. As a result, stereotype continues and will be reinforced. Selective perception also affect our interpretation of the other person's words and deeds.

2. Framing

Framing is a subjective mechanism. We evaluate the situation, and then decide which action to take. We use a certain framework when we interpret and give meaning to people, events, and processes. We give meaning to the elements within the frame. We use framing for decision-making and problem solving by separating or differentiating the elements within the frame and the elements outside the frame.

We use a variety of frames, and the multiple frames can be as follows : (1) Frame where there is confrontation ; (2) Frame which focuses on the outcomes we wish to achieve ; (3) Frame in order to meet the needs ; (4) Frame of process, which means how to make a decision ; (5) Frame which differentiates ourselves and the other person ; and (6) Frame which defines the other person. Frames are multifaceted in nature.

Mismatch of frame can cause a problem. Mismatch occurs when our frame and the frame of the other person are different. It can also takes place when the frame is the same with the other person but its content is different from him or her. In order to fix the gap of mismatch, both frame has to be reframed or either one of them has to be changed. When reframing do not work or do not go smoothly, it is necessary to bring in a third-party to settle the problem.

What affects the selection of frame? They are (1) value, (2) personality,

(3) authority, (4) experience, and (5) position.

Frame can change. Transformation of frame occurs when mutual understanding is established. When does frame transform? Frame change when the negotiating issues themselves change. During the negotiation, we try to convince our own positions and ideas by presenting evidence, data, etc. Both side may refute the proposals and/or ideas of each other. In order to reach agreement, either or both side may amend or adjust one's own proposal, ideas, positions, etc. When both side or one side change the original position into a different one, we can say that the frame of the person who is involved in the negotiation has changed. Here the reframing can be positive or negative. We need to, therefore, understand where the negotiating issues have moved or shifted.

3. Bias

Bias affects negotiation, and those bias can be as follows: (1) Fixed position; (2) Play the game of the fixed-size pie; (3) Incorrect information; and (4) Egoism.

3-1. Fixed position

Fixed position can become a guideline of an action plan to make decisions on what to do and what to achieve. When the position is fixed, we only adapt the evidence which support the plan, and we disregard and/or deny the evidence and data, which do not meet to support the plan. The worst scenario on preserving the fixed position is that the interest of the negotiator will shift to save his or her face instead of trying to achieve the real needs. When the priority becomes to face-saving, there will be a strong possibility on the part of the negotiator to refuse to amend the position. This will automatically lead the negotiating game to win-lose negotiation.

3-2. Play the game of the fixed-size pie

Believing the pie is fixed, the negotiators will play the win-lose negotiation game. The negotiation will become competitive because the interest or the focus of the negotiators will be to obtain most part of the pie, which they be-

lieve the size is fixed. Just like preserving a fixed position, the approach of doing negotiation will be win-lose.

3-3. Incorrect information

When the negotiators believe the wrong information is correct, such incorrect numbers, data, and conditions will lead the negotiator to make a wrong decision. Trusting the wrong ones as valid criteria, therefore, can mess up the problem. In order to avoid this, the negotiators need to carefully look at things from another point of view, so seek for advice from a third-party, to learn from past success, to do careful research and preparation in order to obtain fair value, and to be cool and not to be affected by the atmosphere. Experience is limited in nature, so the negotiators should be aware that past success is an experience which is limited, and not to be too confident to rely on precedence.

3-4. Egoism

Since we are human beings, we all have ego. We therefore need effort to understand the needs, interests, and perspectives of the other party.

Egoism has two factors, internal and external. Ability, effort, mental and physical state are internal factors. Situation, luck and people around are external factors. When the negotiation did not go smoothly or the negotiator could not obtain his or her real needs and became unhappy with the result by believing the failure was caused only by external factors, he or she is overestimating his or her own words and deeds,

4. Emotion and Mood

Emotion and mood are different. Emotion is intense, and long-lasting, and its subject is specific. On the other hand, mood is less intense than emotion, and its duration is shorter than emotion.

4-1. Positive feeling

The negotiator is favorable to the other party when he or she has positive emotion, or his or her mood is positive. When the negotiator is satisfied with

the development, progress and result of the negotiation, positive emotion or mood exist. It becomes possible to move toward win-win negotiation. Positive attitude toward the counterpart will be able to create trust between the negotiating parties, so the procedure on negotiation will become fair. Good result, which can be objectively proved, is expected.

There are, however, problems on positive emotion and/or mood. In some cases one negotiator plays the soft game and his or her counterpart plays hard. When this is the case, the negotiation will become win-lose as a result. The hard player will obtain everything or almost all he or she wants, and the soft player will have to give up his or her needs and feel upset. This is because the soft player tends to be too kind and accept the claims, proposals, ideas and needs of the counterpart. The soft player will thus regret and will feel unhappy with the agreement.

4-2. Negative feeling

Discourage is based on frustration and dissatisfaction, and such negative feeling can make the negotiator aggressive. Unrest or restlessness, which is based on worry, fear, and threat, may make the negotiator withdraw or retaliate from negotiation. Negative feeling can lead the negotiators play the win-lose negotiation game. Negotiators may lose interest and try to avoid the assignments of negotiation, which is to achieve the real needs. Either party or both may make poor judgment for the benefit of both parties. Negative feeling will intensify the confrontation of both parties.

How can we avoid such an unproductive negotiation? When we or the other party selected to play the win-win negotiation game, it can turn the negotiation to a positive one. Relationship problem between the two parties can become cooperative. It can induce collaboration in order to solve the problem.

5. Control of Emotion

Negotiation is conducted by people, and we all have feelings, We constantly need to keep an eye on our feelings as well as the feeling of the other party before and during the negotiation.

In order to make the other party accept the proposal, the message sent to

him or her has to be adjusted to help him or her interpret out message correctly. The message will be interpreted by the listener, and his or her interpretation will affect his or her decision. First step to successful communication relies on having the same or at least similar understanding of the issue by both parties. Emotion and/or mood can prevent us from making appropriate decision-making. We therefore need to pay careful attention to our feeling.

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